

PNT
164

Is the Church Opposed to Workingmen?

By
CHARLES STELZLE

Department of Church and Labor,
the Board of Home Missions of the
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
153 La Salle Street :: :: Chicago

Is the Church Opposed to Workingmen?

“ **T**HE Church has always been against the workingman,” so some labor leaders are wont to say.

But, in the first place, its founder, Jesus Christ, was not against workingmen. Never were more sympathetic words spoken to the “common people” than were uttered by Jesus Christ. We are told that “the common people heard him gladly.” He himself was a carpenter and he must necessarily have had a workingman’s sympathies. He constantly rebuked the oppressors of the poor. The men whom he selected as his disciples and who were the first promoters of the Church were workingmen. During the first centuries of its history, the Church received its strongest support from the great labor guilds of that period—the labor unions, we would now call them—and it is not impossible that Jesus himself was a member of the Carpenters’ Guild in Nazareth.

The prophets of the Church were not opposed to workingmen. The strongest indictments of the labor agitator against

society today are chosen from the sayings of the prophets as they are recorded in the Scriptures. These quotations are given to us by labor leaders, some of whom, at least, are not themselves professing Christians, and it is a testimony to the fact just stated.

The Text-book of the Church is not opposed to workingmen. The principles laid down by its writers would solve the social question if faithfully lived out by both the capitalist and the laborer. Hardly a book treating on political economy which was used in any university ten years ago but is out of date to-day. The Bible is the only book always up-to-date.

up-to-date. It comes from God, and it is the only text-book which the Church officially recognizes.

The leaders in the great religious movements in history were not opposed to workingmen. Indeed, most of them were workingmen themselves. The great religious movements had their origin among the common people. They were fought for by workingmen, of whom thousands upon thousands shed their blood because they believed in the great principles involved.

The preachers of to-day are not opposed to workingmen. Many of them could be named who fearlessly denounce the sins of the rich as well as the sins of the poor.

The ministers' associations are not opposed to workingmen. I have addressed many of them in this country and have never yet found an organization but has been systematic towards workingmen. Furthermore, that the Presbyterian Church has established in the interest of workingmen a special department having for one of its objects the careful investigation of social questions as they have to do with the Church, indicates that this Church is not opposed to workingmen. What better evidence can be desired that the cause of the workingmen is dear to the heart of the Church?

Leaflets by Charles Stelzle.

The Presbyterian Church and Working-men.

Class Spirit in America.

Is the Church Opposed to Workingmen?

Jesus Christ and Rich Men.

Has the Minister a "Closed Shop"?

Labor Leaders in the Church.

One Pastor, One Church, One Year and One Hundred Dollars.

(An Experience in Institutional Church Work.)

The Organization of an Anti-Poverty Society.

The Relation of the Church to the Labor Movement.

A Letter to Ministerial Fraternal Delegates.

Not Missions but Churches for Working-men.

Sent Free on Application.